DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 254 JC 850 120

AUTHOR Graham, Florine R.
TITLE Making Foundations Work.
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at a Meeting of the Virginia State Board for Community Colleges (November, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Fund Raising; *Philanthropic Foundations; *Private Financial Support; *Program Effectiveness; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *New River Community College VA

ABSTRACT

The first step in making a community college foundation successful is to evaluate the institution, its programs, the commitment of its personnel, and the difference it makes in the community. If the college is found to be a viable, integral part of the community, worthy of its support, then the groundwork for seeking that support can be laid. The second step is the organization of the foundation's board of directors. Board members should be prominent and respected community leaders from all walks of life, with various skills, who are able to speak with knowledge and conviction about "their" college. The third step is building friends. At New River Community College (NRCC), this step involved raising the visibility of the college in the community through breakfasts, luncheons, and speaking engagements during which college strengths were emphasized and support was solicited. The final step is implementing the fund-raising activities. Charter membership drives; an on-going development program; an annual fund drive soliciting money from college employees, local industries, and alumni; one-on-one visits to industries served by the college asking for support; and a planned giving program are all part of the fund-raising activities successfully implemented or in the planning stages at NRCC. (LAL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED255254

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
F. R. Graham

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

MAKING FOUNDATIONS WORK

Dr. Florin. R. Graham
Director of College Relations
New River Community College
Dublin, Virginia

Presented at a Meeting of the Virginia State Board for Community Colleges
November 1984

JC 850 120

"MAKING FOUNDATIONS WORK"

Many factors go into "making foundations work." The rules for making them work have all been written by university and private school folk so those of us in two-year public institutions are having to make up our own rules for success as we go along. Our mission is unique in higher education--and most certainly worthy of support. Not only do we provide the nation's work force, we make educational opportunity a possibility for anyone who wants it.

I came to this business via the classroom. Daily I I witnessed people whose lives were dramatically altered because New River Community College existed. I could tell you about a young woman who came to my class from the Richmond prison system--today she's in management in a local business enterprise--or I could tell you about Miss Deaf Virginia or about Miho Towery who's a engineering graduate from Tech today; however, let me tell you about another student I had 10 years ago in a freshman composition class.

Steve was typical of students of the early 70's. He had long bushy red hair, wore torn, faded jeans to class, and thought only those over 30 wore shoes. He was an angry person. (Pause) He was dedicated to making his hour in English class bearable by challenging the establishment as well as his instructor. Steve had flunked out of high school due to circumstances typical of the times, but because all his friends were college bound, he too went to college--

the only one who would accept him--New River. It was New River Community College, according to Steve, that turned his life around. And it was Steve and many others like him that made me know that the college plays an important role in the New River Valley. From being a high school dropout, Steve transferred from New River to Emory & Henry, graduating magna cum laude. He was accepted at UVA's medical school and is today in a heart surgery residency in Houston. Steve stopped by my office the day he left for his residency to say he owed his success to NRCC, asking "Now, what can I do to help you?"

Why this story? To me it epitomizes the first step in making foundations work--institutions must make a difference in the community and those employed by the institution must be committed to making the difference, committed to recognizing the worth of the individual and his or her place in society. So step one in making foundations work is to take a look at your institution and its role in the community--if found wanting, spend your time on programming instead of building a foundation. If it is found to be a viable, integral part of the community, worthy of community support, then begin laying the ground work seeking that support.

The groundwork begins with choosing the Foundation Board. The make-up of the Foundation Board is crucial to having a successful foundation. The board has two primary functions--one is a public relations function and the other a fund-raising function. (Pause) More important than having money is the value of having 20 or so leading citizens of the community committed to the two-year college, understanding its mission, its success, and its problems, and

speaking with knowledge and conviction about "their" community college. The task of obtaining private support becomes much easier when prominent and respected people speak highly of the college and answer the critics. Directors should be leaders from all walks of life. There should be specialized skills among the members. You need financial and investment experts; lawyers, especially those who know something about planned and deferred giving programs; public relations, management, and selling experts.

On our 18-person board at New River we have two corporate presidents, one lawyer, one supreme court justice, one delegate to the Virginia House of Representatives, one CPA, one insurance person, and several distinguished entrepreneurs who either have money, access to money, or manage money for others. Several of our directors are also members of our College Board. We feel we have a truly outstanding Board because it represents a cross-section of the community most familiar with and supportive of the college. One of the real pluses of my job has been working with these folks whom I've grown to regard as friends.

It was the decision of the Board that we spend the first months of operation raising the level of visibility of the college within the community--we called this our "Building Bridges" campaign. We feel this was an important step in making our foundation work. First, we asked one of the 10 most powerful corporate executives in the United States to be our graduation speaker. This gentleman brought many distinguished visitors to our campus for the first time.

Then we developed a list of potential donors and heading the list were all the industries we had served historically. We invited these folks in for breakfast with the President. Then I hit the campaign trail making speeches in every section of our service region to such groups as the Rotary Club and a United Methodist men's morning prayer group, informing them of the contributions the college makes to the region and about the recent organization of the Foundation.

I also held luncheons for women of influence in the community. The first luncheon brought to the campus an executive of a local foundation who subsequently helped us apply for and receive funding from a private foundation for which she is a director. Over the years gifts from her foundation have totaled over $35,000. Needless to say, the luncheon paid off.

The "Building Bridges" campaign laid the groundwork for our Charter Member Fund Drive--the kick off for this event was a wine and cheese party funded by a local bank and "A Stroll Down Broadway" which was a musical review of Broadway featuring Miss Virginia and an assortment of talented entertainers from the New River Valley. The Sunday night performance was by invitation only and brought to the campus area elected officials, lawyers, physicians, and university professors at $10.00 a head. Aside from raising money for the Foundation, the event brought us charter memberships and high visibility. When the Charter Member Fund Drive ended, we had 100 charter members and $135,000.

Since our Charter Member Fund Drive, we have established an on-going development program which includes not only solicitation of state and federal grants, but also the production of

publications designed to maintain high visibility within the service region.

The Foundation is yearly involved in an Annual Fund Drive which includes mailouts to a constituency numbering 7,000--we are on our fourth mailing this year--this time asking for money. The Annual Fund Drive also includes our Campus Fund Drive where each college employee is personally asked to make a gift, an Industrial Fund Drive, and a spring phonathon to alumni asking for gifts. As needed, corporate and foundation proposals are developed. NRCC last year was the recipient of a $55,000 gift from R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company of Winston-Salem in support of our instrumentation program. This gift was the result of a foundation proposal and a personal visit to the Reynolds Foundation office.

Also in place are such activities as Wild, Wonderful Wednesday--a campus fund raiser sponsored by the Macke Corporation, a newly formed alumni organization, and unique flexibility. Last Spring one of our faculty came to me about one of his electricity students who was going to have to quit school unless he could get financial help. The student's three-year-old son had leukemia and the father needed money to get him back and forth to Charlottesville. The Foundation raised $500 for Chris in one week--we raffled two prime parking spaces and students and staff rallied to the cause.

Today planned giving is our primary objective. In September we held our first Charitable Financial Planning Seminar inviting Tom Word, partner in the McGuire, Wood, and Battle firm, to make our keynote address to our college and foundation board members about estate planning.

We are looking for a $3 million endowment--we know this sum won't come over night. However, we are committed to finding resources that will ensure a margin of excellence not afforded any other way. We don't profess to have all the insights to what makes community college foundations work; however, in summary, as we see it, basically there are four steps necessary to making foundations work.

Step 1 Evaluate the place of your institution within the service region to determine the public's opinion about the college. If the college is viewed favorably, begin planning.

Step 2 Organize the Board of Directors, choosing from the leadership in the community. Make sure a number of the directors have expertise to advise the group in legal or fiduciary matters.

Step 3 Friend build. Identify your constituency groups, bring them to the campus--wine them and dine them, all the time educating them about the important role the college plays in the community. Emphasize strengths and begin asking for support for those things you do best.

Step 4 Fund raise. At NRCC our fund-raising plan includes:

1. Annual Fund Drive which includes:
   a. Internal campaign
   b. Direct mail campaign

c. One-on-one visits to industries the college serves asking corporate presidents to consider putting the college in their annual budgets.

d. A spring phonathon to graduates. Last year we called 1,500 graduates from the classes of 75, 76, and 77, and raised $5,000 for scholarships.

In addition to the Annual Fund Drive, we develop corporate and Foundation proposals asking support for a specific need the college has. We are also starting a planned giving program which we hope will lead the way to a major gifts fund drive in search of a $3 million endowment for the college.

Each institutional plan for friend building and fund raising will be different--each should relate to individual needs; however, both must be developed together. Friend building is especially important because right now the Virginia Community College System is too young to have many graduates sitting in powerful positions; consequently, we must go to friends in the communities we serve to gather the financial support we need. I look toward the day when a major portion of our solicitation effort will involve our alumni--I feel confident we will have more than our share of corporate executives, legislators, physicians, and computer whizs; however, until that time I'll spend my time telling the leadership in the New River Valley about the numbers of nurses, instrumentation technicians, electricians, and secretaries we provide for employment in the area. And about the English teachers, mathematicians, and lawyers who began their careers at NRCC.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
MAY 17 1985